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Research Report

REORGANIZING AMERICAN DEFENSES
THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE IN
IN THE POST-COLD WAR WORLD

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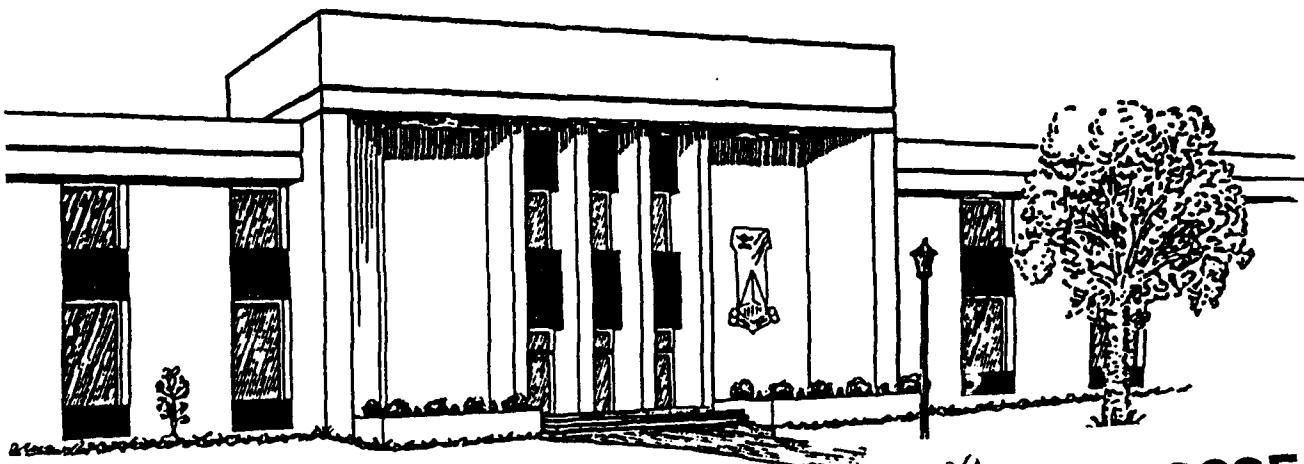
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REORGANIZING AMERICAN DEFENSES

The United States Air Force in the Post-Cold War World

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by

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Reorganizing American Defenses: The United States Air Force in the Post-Cold War World

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The end of the Cold War both necessitates and provides a great opportunity for restructuring US combatant commands and Air Force forces to better support American security interests in the emerging world order. As US forces return to America and reduce in size, they must be reorganized into more flexible, more mobile, more "tailorable" units which can operate jointly in many different climates and operational circumstances. US-based functional combatant commands should also be reorganized and streamlined.

However, as our forces reduce in size and come home, American geographic combatant command headquarters should remain in place, providing a nucleus of theater expertise and forward presence in a security environment which is increasingly regionalized and multipolar in character. These headquarters should establish close ties with Continental US (CONUS) reinforcement forces to provide for rapid deployment and forward operations.

Air components should maintain overseas agreements and facilities for rapid reinforcement by CONUS air forces structured for composite operations along the lines of the numbered air forces of World War II. These composite numbered air forces should be organized "modularly" to be able to deploy and operate under a wide range of available facilities and C3I, enemy threats, weather conditions, and the presence of joint or combined friendly forces.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Timothy N. Carey (MS, Troy State; BS, USAFA) has been interested in airpower in joint and combined operations since his first operational assignment as a forward air controller in Vietnam in 1972-73. He flew 240 combat missions there and holds two Distinguished Flying Crosses, three Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry, and fifteen Air Medals. Other assignments include ATC instructor pilot and executive officer duties, the Pentagon Air Staff Training program, three tours in F-4E and F-4G/F-16C Wild Weasel operations in the US and Europe, Joint Staff duty in the USREDCOM J3, and as chief of the CINC Programs Division at HQ TAC. Colonel Carey is a Distinguished Graduate of SOS, graduate and Distinguished Writer of the Armed Forces Staff College, and a graduate of the Air War College class of 1992.

Introduction

Today it has become almost routine to acknowledge the extraordinary changes that have taken place in international affairs in the last three years, almost as if they were inevitable and predictable. Of course, they were neither. Twenty years ago in the United States, all too many Americans were prepared to abandon the struggle against an aggressive and frightening Soviet empire--persuaded that our social values were the more corrupt, that our system of government was destined to collapse, that communism--not capitalism--was the superior economic organization.

But for those in the United States who were not ready to give up the struggle, the ominous threat that emerged and grew after World War II into the Cold War finally triggered the historical American reaction to actual war--the motivation to rebuild demobilized military forces. These were not "peacetime forces" as so often claimed, but forces engaged in a massive bipolar psychological war of intimidation and national will distinguished from past wars principally by careful maneuvering and confrontation through proxies because of the threat of nuclear escalation and global annihilation. With this war won, America's traditional priorities are quickly resurfacing.

For those who think America has "learned its lesson" of the need for strong standing forces to protect our values and interests, observe what is already happening to defense programs barely a year after Saddam Hussein provided a compelling reminder that human conflict is the rule, not the exception. For those in the rest of the world who suddenly fear America as a potential monopolist of military power, observe the debate over budget

priorities that has rapidly taken shape in the United States. Americans have always attempted, at the conclusion of major conflicts, to dismantle their forces and return to their view of the "normal" state of world affairs--peace--when of course all of history demonstrates the opposite. We now hear Congressional suggestions of a \$150 billion defense budget--about half its current size--even as the world resumes its more traditional national, religious, ethnic, and economic confrontations following the collapse of the last great empire and absent the discipline of the bipolar world alignment.

For those who would blame the Congress for this rapid change in American priorities, I suggest that the Congress is merely reflecting the peoples' historical perceptions and interests. America's revolutionary beginnings are rooted in suspicion of military forces and concentrations of power, and its values are centered on personal freedom and economic opportunity. The basic liberal traditions of American society are resurfacing and are mirrored in the Congress's return to traditional priorities.

The Air Force, to its great credit, is not resisting these fundamental forces in American society and is aggressively restructuring to improve efficiency and effectiveness during this inevitable period of declining resources. This restructuring incorporates organizational doctrines used successfully by the Army Air Forces (AAF) during World War II. The wartime advantages of these doctrines, leading to establishment of "composite" numbered air forces (NAFs), were argued in an earlier paper (1:1-14) and appear to have been rediscovered in the current Air Force MAJCOM restructuring effort.

However, numerous issues and uncertainties remain. The worldwide US combatant command structure, established in the Unified Command Plan (UCP), is still under review and debate. The relationships between Service and combatant command powers and responsibilities are being tested in the aftermath of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act. And questions of how best to integrate the two basic American warfighting organizational forms--functional and geographical--are superimposed over long-standing Service roles and missions issues.

This paper can't possibly address all these questions, which will take years of debate and in fact must continually evolve as the new world order moves in unforeseeable directions. There is no pre-ordained script for these inter-national events and outcomes, only continuous interactions between hundreds of competing and contingent national interests and concerns. This paper will therefore concentrate on how best to restructure Air Force and American combatant forces under our revised military strategy and its reducing resources. It will first summarize historical arguments for composite theater air forces, relate those arguments to current theater forces, and then suggest alternatives for further Air Force and combatant command restructuring.

World War II Numbered Air Force Organization

By the time of America's entry into WW II, the fledgling AAF had convinced Army Chief of Staff George Marshall of the strategic advantages of air force autonomy and coequal status with ground forces under a supreme commander along the lines of the British system. This independent status was central to AAF theories of the great potential of air power if employed in concentrated and

coordinated air campaigns rather than in piecemeal fashion. Although this status was not fully documented until the publication of War Department FM 100-20 in July 1943, the effects of the policy could be seen throughout 1942 as thirteen huge NAFs began to form and deploy throughout the world. (4:14)

These NAFs were different from today's functionally-organized organizations. Although each varied in structure and indeed continued to evolve throughout the war, they combined essentially all flying functions in a single theater air force. They were "composite" NAFs, invariably combining bomber, fighter, airlift, reconnaissance, and logistics/service units into a single geographical organization responsible to their air component and theater commanders for the overall air effort. Unity of command for theater air operations, the AAF's cardinal doctrine, was thereby secured.

The basic structure of these NAFs was established by the first four that were organized geographically in the US, each responsible for coastal patrol and surveillance, air defense, and training of aircrews and support personnel for assignment overseas. Though subject to a series of changes resulting from internal War Department debates over organizing home defenses, these NAFs each created subordinate bomber, interceptor, air base, and air support [ground force support] commands that were also incorporated into the overseas NAF structures. (3:154-155) FM 100-20, Command and Employment of Air Power, described standard theater organization:

In a theater of operations, there will normally be one air force. This air force will be organized in accordance with the task it is required to perform in any particular theater and, therefore, no set organization of an air force can be prescribed. However, the normal composition of an air force includes a strategic air force, a tactical air force, an air

defense command, and an air service command. An air force may also include troop carrier and photographic aviation. (6:4)

Kenney's 5 AF in the Southwest Pacific was a mixed air force conducting both strategic and tactical missions with a ragtag collection of aircraft organized into flexible, task-organized wings. In Great Britain, 8 AF was established, as part of the combined air effort, as a strategic air force for daylight attack against the industrial and military base of Nazi Germany, as was 15 AF from the Mediterranean; 9 AF was relocated from Egypt to England in late 1943 and reorganized as a tactical air force to support the US 12th Army Group in the Normandy invasion and ground campaign against Germany. None of these organizations was exactly alike, depending on differences in theater, mission, assets, and leadership styles. But whether organized as a strategic, tactical, or mixed NAF, each contained fighters, bombers, transports, and reconnaissance aircraft and controlled essentially all the air assets assigned to its particular theater or mission, both for combat operations and service support. (5:31)

Current Numbered Air Force Organization

After World War II, the newly independent US Air Force reestablished its forces primarily along functional lines, creating major air commands (MAJCOMs), with subordinate NAFs, responsible for such missions as strategic bombardment, strategic airlift, and tactical fighter operations. Overseas MAJCOM air components were gradually reduced to tactical air forces only, requiring reinforcement by strategic forces when conflicts such as in Korea or Vietnam required their support.

This revised organizational doctrine made sense when many

believed strategic nuclear forces and the threat of massive retaliation had made theater war obsolete. But regional conflicts and "wars of national liberation" soon surfaced under the bipolar nuclear stalemate, with neither superpower willing to risk escalation to holocaust following a Soviet-American confrontation.

In this new nuclear environment, distinctions between strategic and tactical forces became increasingly fuzzy. The strategic mission became associated with nuclear bombers in a separate MAJCOM. But nuclear weapons steadily reduced in size and increased in explosive yield, thus permitting delivery by long-range tactical aircraft. Previously, FM 100-20 could claim

Heavy bombardment aviation is the backbone of the strategic air force. This class of aviation is characterized by its ability to carry heavy loads of destructive agents for great distances.

FM 100-20 would also state that

The tactical air force may contain the following: reconnaissance aviation, light and medium bombardment units, fighter aviation and an aircraft warning service.

But it also recognized that

In a particularly opportune situation (offensive) or a critical situation (defensive), a part or a whole of the strategic air force may be diverted to tactical air force missions. (6:9-10)

This diversion of "strategic" air assets during war has been required regularly since the creation of functional MAJCOMs and has limited establishing unity of effort in air warfare. In Vietnam, For example, neither theater nor air component commander controlled the targeting and employment of B-52 forces, which remained with CINCSAC, CJCS, and the National Command Authorities (NCA).

Throughout this same period, the tactical NAFs of PACAF, TAC, and USAFE have formed the nucleus of American joint force

commanders' air components. Thus 7 AF was the nominal air component in the US Military Assistance Command Vietnam, as it is today in Korea; 9 AF serves as USCENTAF, the air component for USCINCCENT; 12 AF becomes USSOUTHAF in USSOUTHCOM, and in a contingency normally acts as USCINCAFLANT for USCINCLANT.

These air component commands must, when hostilities break out or threaten, rapidly reactivate communications links and command relationships with strategic bomber, air refueling, reconnaissance, and airlift forces assigned to the theater for the crisis. There is limited peacetime training and coordination with these wartime gained units. An air component commander may not know well the commanders of his principal subordinate combat organizations, their true state of readiness, preferred combat tactics, or current shortfalls in personnel and equipment--in short, all those details of operational knowledge and personal contact which are achieved through daily peacetime command and are essential to immediate and overwhelming combat success. Given enough warning and preparation time, these details can be worked. But we are increasingly required to act quickly and must expect future conflicts to accelerate time factors, as has been true throughout history.

For example, Tactical Air Command's 9 AF maintains and trains its assigned fighter and tactical support forces to be able to provide combat-ready tactical forces for any contingency. 9 AF also serves, as mentioned, as USCENTAF, the air component for USCENTCOM, in a contingency such as the Persian Gulf War of 1991. But air forces assigned to USCENTCOM for war are assigned to many other USAF units outside 9 AF and even TAC. This requires great effort--crossing MAJCOM lines--to organize, prepare, deploy, and

employ these forces. The air component commander must quickly expand his staff, establish policies and procedures, and plan to employ forces with which he has had little daily contact.

Today the Air Force is emphasizing its ability to project power globally on very short notice. To do that, and especially to sustain that global reach and power, Air Force forces must be much more streamlined and better organized than they are today. Command and control procedures and equipment, required combat staff positions, weapon system capabilities and mission tasks, force status and limiting factors--all must be grasped in much greater detail to achieve the reach and power we are advertising even while reducing in size and forward deployment. The massive Air Force MAJCOM restructuring now under way is intended in large part to secure this transformation.

Current Air Force Restructuring

The Air Force is reaching back to its World War II experience to solve its chronic Cold War organizational problems. As discussed above, the AAF established unity of command over essentially all assigned US air forces at the theater level (and over Allied theater air forces when circumstances favored), while emphasizing decentralized execution at lower levels. This allowed subordinate commanders, with specialized mission expertise, to make tactical decisions based on local battle conditions. Centralized control maximized airpower's ability to mass against priority targets, capitalizing on its speed, range, firepower, and flexibility. Decentralized execution reduced centralized control's potential to inhibit tactical initiative when the "fog and friction" of war presented commanders with risks and opportunities

outside the established plan. Centralized control focused on planning and directing the Who, What, Where, and When of a campaign; decentralized execution concentrated on the How and necessary adjustments to the plan.

The composite theater NAFs of WW II provided a single commander the power of central control over all assigned air forces. This commander planned the efforts of his air forces to support the theater commander's objectives and relied on the specialized mission expertise of his subordinate commanders to execute their individual missions in the air campaign. This commander also came to know well his subordinate commanders in all mission areas since they were assigned directly to him.

Today, a return to these organizational doctrines is possible because of the reductions and reorganizations required of the US Air Force. The far-sighted consolidation in the US of MAC, SAC, and TAC forces into two streamlined new commands--Air Combat Command (ACC) and Air Mobility Command (AMC)--will reduce headquarters manning in parallel with the drawdowns in force structure. But more importantly it makes it possible to create composite NAFs and air components for CENTCOM, LANTCOM, NORAD, and SOUTHCOM and to reorganize the limited air assets that must be shared by these supported CINCs. Most "Global Power" strategic and tactical bombers, fighters, reconnaissance assets, and ICBMs are coming together in ACC. At the same time, the "Global Reach" strategic air forces are concentrated in AMC, which retains long-range airlifters and absorbs the majority of SAC tankers that are being consolidated in 15 AF and transferred from SAC to AMC.

NAF manning is also being reduced in an effort to keep the

"tooth to tail" ratio as high as possible, and TAC NAFs are concentrating on their wartime responsibilities as air components while Service support issues are worked in the wing-MAJCOM-Air Staff chain of command. Almost all Air Force air division headquarters are being eliminated, and multiple-wing bases are transformed into single, composite wings under a senior installation commander. In a few cases, new composite wings are being created to provide high-readiness, quick-response forces possessing the major mission elements required to conduct a small, independent air campaign or support rapidly-deployed troops.

ACC NAFs were initially identified to remain weapon system-specific, e.g., bomber wings only in 8 AF, fighter wings only in 9 and 12 AFs. They now are planning to mix some bomber and fighter wings among the NAFs. This, combined with the assignment of tanker and tactical airlift forces to ACC, will give its NAFs/air components day-to-day centralized control over truly composite forces for the first time since WW II.

Another AAF organizational innovation from WW II could further increase the capability of composite NAFs. General George Kenney, while commander of 5 AF under MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific, faced chronic shortages of aircraft, supplies and spare parts, munitions, and personnel as priority went to the European theater. Yet he was responsible for a series of crucial air campaigns from Rabaul to Buna, the Huon Gulf, and along the northern coast of New Guinea, the Dutch East Indies, Borneo, the Philippines, and Taiwan en route to Japan. This brilliant and innovative AAF combat leader maximized the advantages of his composite NAF.

Authorized three bomb wings and two fighter wings within the

5 AF Bomber and Fighter Commands, Kenney created his own Air Task Forces (ATFs). His assigned 308, 309, and 310 "Bomb Wings" actually became Kenney's 1, 2, and 3 ATFs. They were composed of bomber, fighter, troop carrier, and reconnaissance squadrons temporarily attached to them by Kenney from their parent commands for the duration of the ATF's assigned mission. When the "bomb wing" completed its assigned mission, the flying units were reassigned among the ATFs according to their next taskings. (2:II, VII) The same approach could be applied effectively today if, first, the combat units being concentrated in the US are equipped as self-contained modules; and second, if each NAF/air component commander has command of all required mission-type aircraft. This task force organizational approach has long been employed by the US Army and Navy. Properly supported, it can further enhance one of air power's greatest attributes--flexibility.

The efficient restructuring of overseas Air Force forces is more complicated. PACAF and USAFE are set to take over theater-assigned tactical airlift forces, which should improve their support of theater air priorities. But creating truly composite air components for European and Pacific unified commands is difficult while national debate goes on over the degree of Forward Presence the United States should maintain. This issue is heightened as Americans question funding much of the defense of former enemies who are then seen to concentrate their own resources on economic development. This debate will influence the ongoing NCA and CJCS review of the worldwide combatant command structure laid out in the UCP. At the same time, the Air Force vision of Global Reach and Global Power, while helping to make the case for

new strategic bomber and airlift systems, will also undermine arguments for maintaining composite air forces overseas. As a result, we must restructure overseas commands and air components in the UCP to match better our new national security strategy.

Unified Command Plan Restructuring

The end of the Cold War has triggered considerable DoD and Service debate on how best to reorganize for the uncertain direction of world events and threats to our security. The CJCS Base Force proposals defined minimum force requirements to maintain America's superpower status, but suggested also a radical shift in combatant command structure that would greatly reduce the number of theaters of operations.

The Base Force was interpreted by many to mean consolidating all existing combatants into four commands: Atlantic Command, Pacific Command, Strategic Command, and Contingency Command. In 1990, Air Staff planners were discussing such possible worldwide restructuring options at Air Force planning conferences. Many possibilities existed, including combining EUCOM, LANTCOM, and CENTCOM under an Atlantic Command; retaining Pacific Command; combining SOUTHCOM, NORAD, FORSCOM, SOCOM, and CONUS Air Force fighter forces in varying options of an Americas Command and/or Contingency Command; and looking for ways to reorganize the strategic missions of SAC, SPACECOM, and NORAD.

The idea of organizing around just four combatant commands may indeed have been the CJCS concept at one time. However, no such radical combatant command reductions are now planned. Still, some changes are already underway and others are under consideration. The Air Force is advocating ACC as a specified command but is

evaluating a US Forces Command of CONUS air and ground forces. SAC's alert mission is being transferred to a unified Strategic Command. Other functional combatant command missions--space, transportation, special operations--are increasing in importance and need to be integrated better with the theater commands. USSOUTHCOM HQ returns to the United States before 2000 under provisions of the Carter-Torrijos treaties, suggesting the need to review our overall Western Hemisphere defense structure. And the Forward Presence strategy, reducing American forward basing, requires a CONUS command and force structure able to integrate easily into overseas forces. To avoid piecemeal restructuring, it is important to review the entire American combatant structure in its most basic outlines--geographical and functional.

Geographical and Functional Commands

American combatant commands are first organized by either functional or geographical responsibility:

GEOGRAPHICAL	FUNCTIONAL
USCENTCOM	USSOCOM
USEUCOM	USSPACECOM/NORAD
USLANTCOM	USSTRATCOM
USPACOM	USTRANSCOM
USSOUTHCOM	FORSCOM

Reorganizing Geographical Combatant Commands

The geographical organizations into which America organizes its combatant commands need to be updated to keep pace with the international changes of an evolving new world order. To its credit, the DoD has already responded with the Forward Presence

strategy and the Base Force concept. The Air Force too, with "Global Reach Global Power," has matched Air Force doctrine with strong national pressures to reduce our overseas military presence. This new doctrine can be supported by assigning specific ACC composite NAFs to overseas combatant commands as integral reinforcing elements of the remaining forward-based air components; examples will be suggested below. These NAFs would deploy headquarters and a balanced force of strategic, tactical, and specialized aircraft. But the need to reduce and later reinforce overseas forces does not warrant consolidating overseas commands without carefully considering US interests.

First, consolidating geographical commands does not match the strategic setting facing us in the post-Cold War world. The collapse of Soviet communist influence does not reduce the geographic diversity or number of conflicts affecting US interests. Only the potential military scale of conflict is reduced. In fact, the number and diversity of conflicts is seen to be increasing. Therefore, we should maintain our presence as widely as possible, even if with greatly reduced overseas forces, while improving our ability to reinforce those commands rapidly. Example: if Panamanian public opinion is favorable after its 1994 elections, we should discuss with Panama the mutual advantages of maintaining some degree of regional American presence after the Canal treaties take effect 31 December 1999. If conditions in Panama do not allow, we should consider alternatives in Honduras and elsewhere. We should weigh similar long-term possibilities for limited presence in other areas of important interests, including the Caribbean, Singapore/SEA, the Mediterranean, and Middle East.

In Europe and the Middle East, it does not make good sense to combine USCENTCOM and USEUCOM into an Atlantic Command, especially as European forces are brought home or inactivated. Instability and conflict in Europe is a major concern that will occupy all of a smaller EUCOM's attention for many years to come. EUCOM needs to be able to focus on the distinct issues of that continent. The same holds true for the CENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR), which will remain an area of vital American national interest for decades. In fact, as ethnic and religious conflicts increase in relative importance in the post-Cold War world, it may make better sense to transfer all the Middle East and Africa--with their significant Muslim influence--into CENTCOM's AOR. EUCOM will have fewer forces and smaller staffs; CENTCOM already relies primarily on CONUS forces and is experienced with Muslim cultures.

As United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) draws down to just a few wings, it will become increasingly inefficient to maintain a full MAJCOM-size headquarters and multiple NAFs. However, retaining USAFE maintains US presence in the NATO command structure and the framework for rapid CONUS reinforcement in the event of crisis. Forward Presence and reinforcement requirements in USAFE would be met by a comprehensive force structure connection to ACC. Seventeenth Air Force and USAFE HQ should stay in Germany to help maintain Alliance solidarity and a modest nuclear deterrence on German soil. Seventeenth Air Force also would be responsible for future cooperation with East European air forces adjacent to its AOR and in Southern Europe.

Third Air Force could transfer its forces to Seventeenth Air Force and inactivate after concluding preliminary basing agreements

with the UK for the return of forces to England when required. In the US, 8 AF, with its great tradition in England, would have primary responsibility within ACC for organizing and training to deploy headquarters and forces to reinforce NATO when required. A permanent 8 AF Advanced Echelon would be established in the UK. Eighth Air Force would have backup responsibilities to reinforce CENTAF in the expanded CENTCOM AOR.

In Southern Europe, the Sixteenth Air Force would inactivate after concluding preliminary basing agreements in the region. In the US, 9 AF, with a tradition in the Mediterranean, would assume responsibility within ACC for organizing a limited capability to reinforce the NATO southern flank adjacent to its primary CENTAF Africa/Middle East AOR. Ninth Air Force would be responsible for coordinating US Air Force agreements made in Southern Europe in support of CENTAF missions in the adjacent AOR.

In the Pacific, where US Air Force forces will also be limited to a handful of wings, NAF headquarters would also be reduced. Seventh Air Force would remain as the principal composite NAF in Korea. Fifth Air Force, with a great tradition in the Pacific, would assume responsibility for all forces in the Japanese islands, Guam, and Singapore. Thirteenth Air Force would transfer all assets to 5 AF and inactivate.

Eleventh Air Force, with its tradition in Alaska, would remain in place but be reassigned to the Global Power forces of ACC. It would take over primary responsibility from 12 AF for organizing and training to deploy headquarters and forces to reinforce PACAF. It would continue to "chop" air defense alert forces to NORAD in its Alaska NORAD Region mission. Twelfth Air Force would assume

backup reinforcement responsibility in the Pacific. When changes in the Korean standoff eventually allow the return of forces and inactivation of 7 AF, 11 AF could be reassigned to PACAF.

In Central and South America, 12 AF would retain within ACC its primary responsibilities as USSOUTHAF: assisting American efforts in the AOR to support nationbuilding and democratic government, humanitarian assistance, and reducing the flow of illegal drugs into the US. As SOUTHCOM headquarters is returned to the US from Panama by the end of 1999, 12 AF/SOUTHAF should continue its deployments for training to the maximum extent possible. It should implement US Air Force agreements made in the AOR, including any forward basing arrangements that can be made.

In the Caribbean, 12 AF would maintain its role as acting CINCAFLANT to USLANTCOM. It would continue to play its leading role in Air Force support for LANTCOM counterdrug operations in close coordination with its own counterdrug forces in the SOUTHCOM AOR. It would work closely with CINCLANTFLT and FMFLANT to precoordinate on Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) agreements, especially in preparation for any Caribbean contingencies that would involve both Air Force and naval air forces. When conditions permit, it would increase contacts with post-Castro Cuban air force counterparts to support improved relations there.

The changes outlined above contemplate a closer command arrangement between overseas CINCs' air components and entire CONUS NAFs, with the goal of maintaining Forward Presence with fewer deployed forces. However, a number of key "force multiplier" aircraft--such as F-4Gs, EF-111s, RF-4s, F-117s, B-2s, and radar

surveillance, strategic reconnaissance, and C3 aircraft--are not possessed in sufficient numbers to provide dedicated units to each CONUS reinforcing NAF. This should be changed--if necessary by offsets from existing forces--leaving a smaller but properly balanced force structure. In the meantime, it may be necessary to create a CONUS-based composite NAF which can support any theater command with these limited assets, organized along the lines of Hap Arnold's B-29 force of World War II. But unlike that strategic air force or SAC bombers during Vietnam, it should be assigned directly to the supported air component commander. This NAF could make good use of Kenney's ATF approach when preparing to support a particular theater mission.

In North America, the strategic air defense mission conducted by NORAD's combined headquarters should adopt a true Total Force approach. All CONUS air defense fighter squadrons are now TAC-gained Air National Guard units. These units should continue to be commanded by CONUS NORAD Region, but it should become an Air National Guard headquarters reporting directly to CINCNORAD while being supported by ACC. Let the ANG assume total responsibility for CONUS air defense.

These geographical structure changes, though considerable, represent a relatively short-term view of the adjustments needed to accommodate today's rapidly changing world. But these are exceptional times. Such organizational changes should not become routine, adopted as part of our continuous-improvement movement, since too much organizational turmoil would disrupt unit cohesion and its focus on the mission. Structures must change in step with evolving strategic circumstances in each theater, but any such

change should be based on those fundamental organizational doctrines developed in our early years and refined in World War II.

For example, we will some day be able to organize even smaller overseas air forces under a centralized, CONUS-based worldwide air commander, leading eventually to entirely CONUS- and space-based forces. This will require a number of precursor changes in our alliance relationships, threats, weapon system capabilities, and national security strategies. Such possibilities can not be forced now, but must await uncertain changes in world events. The DoD and especially the Air Force must anticipate such organizational changes in the intermediate future 10 to 20 years ahead, but must not abandon its fundamental organizational doctrines. These changes will be concentrated mostly in the functional commands, which will play a vastly greater role in the global, near-real-time arena of future military conflict.

Reorganizing Functional Combatant Commands

The specialized missions of USSOCOM, USSPACECOM, and USTRANSCOM are especially important in the emerging world order. Not only will rapid transportation and reinforcement become more critical, but we now face a broadening range of threats--from crude terrorist acts of aggression to sophisticated ballistic missiles. These threats will cut across all geographical theaters; the functional commands must be able to operate in them all.

Space support needs the most reorganizing. Space operations involve virtually all geographic and functional missions but are inadequately integrated into any of the combatant commands. This is not meant to advocate unilaterally continuing the old superpower race to militarize space; but in the long run it will not be

possible to prevent military expansion into space, any more than it was possible to prevent military expansion into the air. The best course of action is to maintain technological superiority to deny potential adversaries an opportunity to "break out" militarily in space, while developing less-threatening space capabilities such as defenses against ballistic missiles.

First, USSPACECOM and the other commands must both improve their space support staffs to exploit the great advances already available in communications, reconnaissance/targeting, navigation, weather forecasting, and missile defense. Combatant commands and their components need dedicated space support cells to improve space operations in all these areas. PACAF's 7AF is one of the few combat organizations which is now organizing to improve its space support. AFSPACECOM, as it takes operational control of space assets from the research and development community, should be better able to support theater combat. But most combatant commands, and even their "aerospace" components, have a long way to go to integrate existing space capabilities into their operations.

For the longer term, USSPACECOM/NORAD and USSTRATCOM missions should be restructured, to improve space integration as well as to match the reductions in superpower forces. The major functions of these commands are expected to be:

Strategic offensive forces (ground and sea-based)

Strategic air defense forces

Strategic missile defenses (ground and space-based)

Theater ballistic missile defense support

Space systems support to combatant commands

USSTRATCOM, now set to command alert-force ICBMs, SLBMs, and

bombers, should also take over the air defense alert mission now handled by NORAD. These commands already share the same warning and attack assessment network; NORAD air defense fighters are largely organized to defend USSTRATCOM forces from enemy attack; and both strategic offense and defense forces should continue to decrease, arguing for cuts in their headquarters' size and rank structure. This combined USSTRATCOM might be divided into two subordinate commands--one unified to control strategic offensive forces, one combined to control US and Canadian air defenses.

In addition, moving the air defense mission to USSTRATCOM would pave the way for assigning a space specialist as CINCSPACE, who would not have to have worked his way through the pilot ranks. We already have available the first generation of Air Force space specialists. They should have their own commanders, as with our other mission specialties.

The other three functions listed above would be USSPACECOM's primary responsibility--strategic missile defense, theater ballistic missile defense, and space support systems. USSPACECOM (not SDIO) should operate the Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS) system of the SDI, controlling both the worldwide space-based and CONUS land-based strategic missile defenses. This would also allow closer CONUS integration of land- and space-based defenses by one command, whereas CONAD/NORAD operated our land-based NIKE missile systems in the 1950s-1970s.

USSPACECOM should also lead initial anti-theater ballistic missile (ATBM) efforts. First, the GPALS detection system will monitor the entire world, requiring close coordination between theaters and USSPACECOM. Second, space-based GPALS will be

effective against some TBMs. Finally, limited initial ground- and sea-based TBM defenses could be provided by ARSPACE and NAVSPACE in a theater contingency in the same way that USSOCOM provides limited special operations forces. If enemy TBMs continue to proliferate in future decades, it may eventually be necessary to assign ground-based ATBM forces to each affected combatant command.

USSPACECOM should remain the supporting command for such common-use space support functions as communications, navigation, and weather forecasting, and should manage specialized tactical satellite (TACSAT) support as it inevitably comes on line. It therefore makes sense to expand USSPACECOM's capability to improve our tactical exploitation of national capabilities. Most important will be accelerated cataloguing and disseminating of all-source intelligence products down to unit levels through improved space systems and better coordination between intelligence agencies. This will be one of USSPACECOM's most important support roles.

Another key issue concerns how best to organize our increasingly CONUS-based forces. A Contingency Command, suggested in the Chairman's Base Force, would presumably have functional responsibilities to respond with reinforcements anywhere in the world as a result of our overseas drawdowns. This was largely the mission of the US Readiness Command until it inactivated in 1987. (USREDCOM also had responsibilities for organizing CONUS special operations capabilities, now controlled by USSOCOM--would a Contingency Command take back the special operations mission too?)

The major reason for USREDCOM's inactivation as a combatant command was that it had no true combat mission or AOR, although it did perform valuable work in promoting joint and combined

warfighting through exercises and development of joint tactics, techniques, and procedures. A new Contingency Command would suffer from similar problems as long as theater CINCs have responsibility for essentially all regions of the world, as they do today.

A way to integrate CONUS forces into our combatant commands has already been suggested above: inactivating excess overseas air components and replacing them with CONUS-based NAFs assigned to specific overseas locations and missions. It would approximate, on a much larger scale, the old USAFE/TAC dual-basing procedure used in Europe, in that an entire composite NAF--headquarters as well as combat units--would be assigned an overseas theater mission. Similar arrangements could be maintained with CONUS ground units already organized and commanded by FORSCOM, which would train for primary and backup taskings in assigned theater CINCs' commands.

Under this arrangement, a separate Contingency Command (and its additional CONUS headquarters) would not have to be created. Instead, FORSCOM and ACC would both have specified command status as they organized, trained, and equipped--but also deployed and employed--ground and air headquarters and forces as CONUS-based composite elements of a theater CINC's combat command. However, it would also be possible to organize and train joint CONUS task forces--earmarked for various overseas theaters--under the control of a unified US Contingency Command, as was done by USREDCOM.

US naval forces, already divided into the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets and Fleet Marine Forces, are equipped, organized, and accustomed to task organization assignments. This gives them the flexibility to move units, with help from USTRANSCOM, almost anywhere they might be needed. USTRANSCOM, of course, will play an

especially important role in our CONUS-based strategy. Its joint structure provides for greatly-improved coordination between all elements of the military transportation system.

In broadest perspective, the great efforts to improve the joint employment of US forces rebuilt during the 1980s have produced a military force of unparalleled strength and ability. For all the perceived failings of our military development and procurement systems, we have created the best defense forces of any in the world. It remains for us to conserve as much of that strength as possible in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Past, Present, and Future

The US Air Force has embarked on a noteworthy effort to reorganize in the face of major changes in the international security environment. Incredibly, it seems to be doing so without the familiar high-level bureaucratic resistance to change. In fact, it appears this "revolution" is being led from on high while younger, normally less-entrenched Air Force minds are resisting changes at every opportunity--a strange turnaround in roles. However, a simple understanding of American values, a review of the short history of Air Force organization, and a look at world events all make it clear that major adjustments must be made in the structure of the Air Force and indeed the entire DoD.

Still, this Air Force "revolution" is grounded in our past. We have reached back to World War II to come finally to grips with the chain-of-command problems that existed in Korea and persisted throughout the Vietnam war. We rediscovered our founding principle--unity of command--which had been discarded in the early, euphoric days of Massive Retaliation when the Air Force thought

military conflict could be deterred permanently.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act has placed greater power in the operational chain of command and the combatant CINC, who exemplifies unity of command. This has helped the Air Force in its effort to improve the decisiveness of airpower, even though it may at times resent the greater influence of the CINCs in "Air Force" matters. At the same time, the Air Force's "Global Reach Global Power" doctrine requires organizing in peacetime as closely as possible to wartime organization in order to improve speed, flexibility, and responsiveness.

All these circumstances argue for a return to organizational doctrines developed in the composite NAFs of World War II, in which a single theater air commander controlled essentially all air assets in his area of responsibility and was able to orchestrate their effort in support of the theater commander's campaign. Composite organization allows the air commander to organize, train, exercise, deploy, task, and employ his assigned forces according to that theater campaign plan.

The stunning success last year of a great composite air force, organized over a five-month period in the Persian Gulf and operating under true unity of command, demonstrates its potential for decisive military effect. Of course, achieving unity of command is itself just a means to an end--unity of effort--in which all elements work closely together to achieve the military objective. To the extent that the Air Force can apply the organizational lessons of its past to achieve that unity of effort in the present, it will increase our ability to secure a stable future for our country and its allies.

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